

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

DESCRIPTION

The Chesterfield Emergency Communications Center is the 911 answering point for all public safety departments in the county. The center receives and processes incoming calls for service, then promptly dispatches the appropriate Police, Fire, and/or EMS resources to handle the situation. In addition, the center handles radio dispatch for the Sheriff's Office and Animal Control. The personnel who staff the center are the "lifeline" in the county's public safety system. For calls with a medical emergency, appropriate resources are immediately dispatched and the caller is then given pre-arrival medical instructions utilizing a nationally recognized system of Emergency Medical Dispatch.

The county acknowledges and advertises to the public the availability of an enhanced 911 emergency telephone system for reporting emergencies. In doing so, it has become an expectation by the public that the county answers all emergency calls and responds to problems 24 hours per day, seven days per week. In addition to the emergency calls, the center receives and answers many telephone calls that are for non-emergency information or public service. The center also provides referrals, gives directions, and answers questions about county procedures and practices, thereby helping to promote seamless customer service to citizens of Chesterfield County.

FINANCIAL ACTIVITY

	FY2003 Actual	FY2004 Adopted	Biennium		Change FY2004 to FY2005	FY2007 Projected	FY2008 Projected	FY2009 Projected
			FY2005 1 st Year	FY2006 2 nd Year				
Personnel	\$3,738,633	\$4,004,300	\$4,342,000	\$4,394,800	8.4%	\$4,394,800	\$4,394,800	\$4,394,800
Operating	1,161,006	1,364,400	1,373,800	1,381,500	0.7%	1,381,500	1,381,500	1,381,500
Capital	<u>35,213</u>	<u>39,000</u>	<u>12,000</u>	<u>12,000</u>	-69.2%	<u>12,000</u>	<u>12,000</u>	<u>12,000</u>
Total	\$4,934,852	\$5,407,700	\$5,727,800	\$5,788,300	5.9%	\$5,788,300	\$5,788,300	\$5,788,300
Revenue	<u>4,094,739</u>	<u>4,224,500</u>	<u>4,215,100</u>	<u>4,215,100</u>	-0.2%	<u>4,215,100</u>	<u>4,215,100</u>	<u>4,215,100</u>
Net Cost	\$840,113	\$1,183,200	\$1,512,700	\$1,573,200	27.8%	\$1,573,200	\$1,573,200	\$1,573,200
FT Pos.	82	82	82	82	0	82	82	82

BIENNIAL BUDGET ANALYSIS

As part of the Emergency Communications Center's (ECC) efforts to train citizens in the use of 911 services, the department will continue a 911 program in the schools during FY2005 and FY2006. This program is offered in conjunction with the Police Department and teaches approximately 5,000 young people per year when and how to use 911 services. The center hopes to expand efforts to include educating the public on the kinds of situations that constitute an emergency and warrant calling 911.

Personnel are available to receive and dispatch calls for service 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. Calls for service increased by 4.5 percent in calendar year 2003 to 175,882. Even with the increase in the number of calls, the department was able to maintain low process times (the amount of time it takes to receive and then dispatch a call). A major impact on these process times is the increasing number of callers who do not speak English. As a result, ECC has contracted with a service that provides translation for multiple languages on demand.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

The department continues to experience significant increases in wireless 911 calls, which originate from callers reaching wireless communication towers in Chesterfield County. As the use of cellular phones becomes more prevalent, it is anticipated that wireless 911 calls to the center will continue to increase at a rate of 5,000 calls annually, caused in part by multiple persons reporting the same incident.

In an effort to make its operation more efficient and productive, the department continued to restructure its operations in FY2004. The result will be one shift supervisor and three assistant shift supervisors on duty on any given shift. In addition, during FY2003 and FY2004, the ECC in conjunction with the county's other public safety departments began the process of implementing a new Computer Aided Dispatch system (CADS) as part of the county's Capital Improvement Program. This system, when completed, will significantly change the way ECC processes emergency calls by integrating it with the phone, radio and records management systems. ECC personnel will be provided vital information regarding the type and location of emergency calls and through the use of mobile data terminals; field personnel will have access to reporting systems and historical files. This will allow ECC personnel to focus on the primary functions of emergency call taking, dispatching and coordinating public safety voice radio traffic. It is also anticipated that the department will take a greater role in monitoring the security systems of county buildings beginning in FY2005. This will require additional staffing of these systems twenty-four hours a day.

There are several bills before the state General Assembly regarding changing the tax rate structure of landline and cellular 911 taxes and at this time the full impact on the county is unknown. It is likely the result will be a loss in flexibility for the county in the future but some assurances have been given that the changes will be revenue neutral to localities.

Additional funding has been requested in FY2005 for personal computers for the center's radio and dictaphone positions, as well as for replacement chairs and for three emergency communications officer positions. One of these positions was requested to replace the position converted to a full-time training facilitator. Two officers are also requested to replace the two positions reclassified as managers of operations and operations support. At this time, funding has not been identified for the above items or the positions.

However, during FY2004, due to an extra distribution of funds from the state Wireless Board related to a prior year adjustment, the center was able to purchase much needed upgrades to its phone system. Also, the funds enabled access points at the emergency backup center and the purchase of replacement monitors at radio and supervisor consoles for the new CADS.

The FY2005 budget includes an additional \$25,000 to partially offset expected increases in radio shop charges. The FY2005 budget also reflects increases due to expected health care, retirement rate changes, and a modest merit. The FY2006 budget includes additional funds due to increases expected in healthcare and risk management rates.

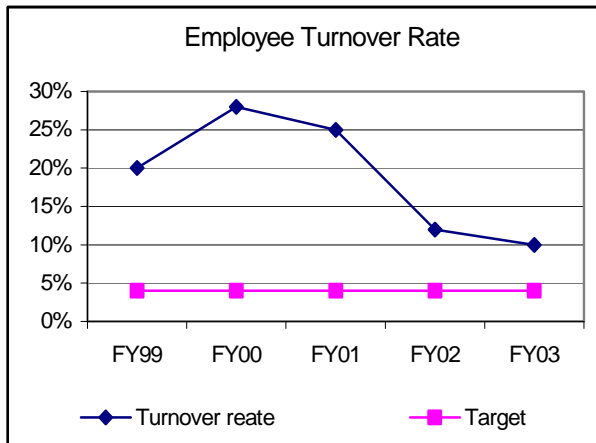
EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Goal: To recruit, develop and support qualified and diverse individuals. Supports countywide Strategic Goal Number 6

Objective: Increase staffing levels in order to meet performance objectives

Measure: Rate of turnover of fully trained personnel in the Emergency Communications Center



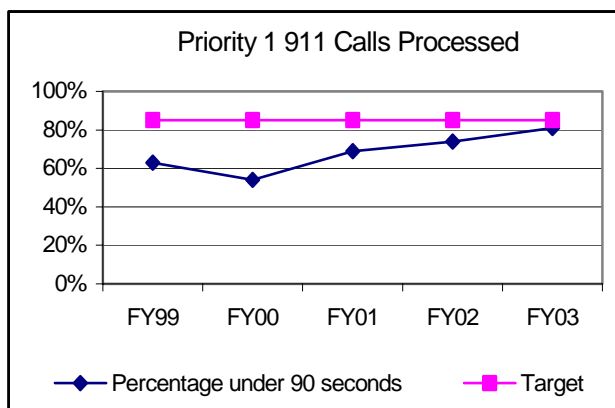
Initiatives

- improvement of supervisory skills
- employee cross-training
- staff development courses
- positive feedback and reinforcement
- rewards and recognition
- continuous recruitment
- improvements to new-hire training process

Goal: To provide timely entry and dispatch of calls for service for the county's Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Departments. Supports countywide Strategic Goal Number 4

Objective: To increase potentially life-saving services to the citizens

Measure: Percentage of time in which priority-one calls are received and dispatched in 90 seconds or less (these are primarily Fire and EMS calls for service)

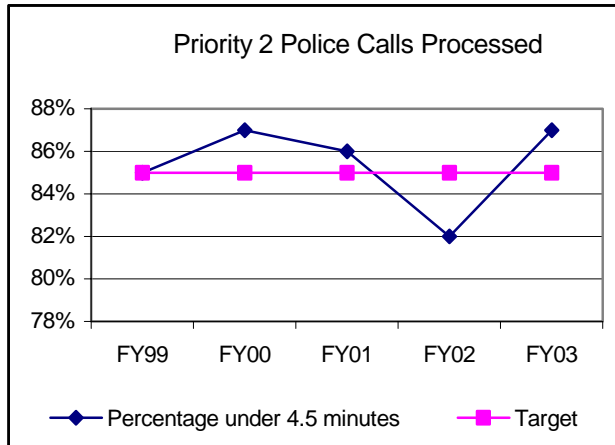


Initiatives

- continuous improvements of each Emergency Communications Officer's skills in call taking and dispatching.
- quality assurance audits for both accuracy and timeliness including periodic reviews of calls with individual staff
- Computer Aided Dispatch System (CADS) funded in the County Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

- Goal:** To provide timely entry and dispatch of calls for service for the county's Police, Fire and EMS Departments. Supports countywide Strategic Goal Number 4
- Objective:** To efficiently take and dispatch Police priority-two calls for service for the protection of our customers
- Measure:** Percentage of time in which Police priority-two calls are received and dispatched in 4.5 minutes or less



Initiatives

- continuous improvements of each Emergency Communications Officer's skills in call taking and dispatching.
- quality assurance audits for both accuracy and timeliness including periodic reviews of calls with individual staff.
- Computer Aided Dispatch System (CADS) funded in the County Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

The wireless telephone industry has introduced changes in their network that provide the capability to receive location information on wireless 911 calls. The Center has taken advantage of this availability with most wireless companies and plans to expand this customer service in the future.

Included in the county Capital Improvement Program (CIP) in FY2008 – FY2010 are funds that will allow the replacement of the current 911 phone system with newer technology. Due to anticipated changes in 911 service delivery, the current system would not likely be able to support the new technology without these needed upgrades.

Likewise, with technological advancements, increased Department of Criminal Justice Services accreditation mandates, and the need to keep pace with continuous change, quality customer service will continue to necessitate an examination of the ECC training process. To further this goal, the Emergency Communications Center will begin the process of seeking accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. This process is expected to take about two years and will help ensure that the department and its staff continue to provide critical services to county citizens in the most efficient and cost-effective way.